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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 003006

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/02/2013

TAGS: [ABUD IT](#) [KSEP KTIA](#) [MARR PARM](#) [PREL MASS](#) [KICC EUN](#)

SUBJECT: ITALIAN EU PRESIDENCY TO CRITICIZE US SUSPENSION
OF MILITARY AID

REF: A. SECSTATE 188695

[1](#)B. 02 ROME 5018

CLASSIFIED BY: DCM EMIL SKODON FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) THERE HAS A STRONG NEGATIVE REACTION AMONG EU MEMBERS TO OUR DECISION TO SUSPEND MILITARY AID TO 35 COUNTRIES THAT HAVE NOT SIGNED ARTICLE 98 AGREEMENTS (REF A), AMBASSADOR GIANCARLO ARAGONA, THE MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR, TOLD DCM JULY [1](#)2. THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE EU PARLIAMENT, WHERE PM BERLUSCONI AND FM FRATTINI ARE TO SPEAK JULY 2, IS "VERY HOT," ADDED ARAGONA. FRATTINI, AS FM FOR THE PRESIDENCY STATE, WOULD BE OBLIGATED TO CRITICIZE THE USG DECISION, ALTHOUGH ARAGONA ASSURED US THAT FRATTINI WOULD KEEP THE CRITICISM AS MILD AS POSSIBLE.

[1](#)2. (C) ARAGONA SAID THAT ITALY WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK TO PREVENT THIS ISSUE FROM BECOMING A GREATER IRRITANT IN US-EU RELATIONS. DESPITE THE GOOD START WE MADE IN BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS LAST FALL (REF B), IT WAS UNLIKELY ITALY COULD SIGN AN ARTICLE 98 AGREEMENT WITH THE US WHILE PRESIDENT OF THE EU, SAID ARAGONA. DCM STRESSED THE NEED TO CONTINUE WORKING TOWARD ARTICLE 98 AGREEMENTS, NOTING THAT THE DEPTH OF CONCERN IN THE US WAS REFLECTED IN THE JULY 1 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CONGRESSIONALLY MANDATED AID SUSPENSIONS.

[1](#)3. (U) AS OF COB JULY 2, FRATTINI HAD NOT YET SPOKEN AT THE EU PARLIAMENT.
SEMBLER

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2003ROME03006 - Classification: CONFIDENTIAL